

STATE OF NEBRASKA



Dave Heineman
Governor

OCCUPANCY CLASSIFICATION FOR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES



STATE FIRE MARSHAL
John Falgione
Fire Marshal

Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) will be classified in the *Life Safety Code* as one of the following:

- 1. Residential Board and Care Occupancy**
 - A. Small Facility (Up to 16 Residents)**
 - B. Large Facility (More than 16 Residents)**
- 2. Limited Care Facility (Health Care Occupancy)**

To assist in occupancy classification, a facility must provide information to the State Fire Marshal's Office regarding the abilities of the residents and staff. Facility admission and retention policies that will specify the minimum cognitive and physical abilities of a resident to gain admission and the policy for retention of residents as they age in place will be beneficial in determining classification. Minimum staffing levels over a 24-hour period and the training each staff member has received regarding fire and life safety are also important. Extra staff may be needed to assist a person with impaired mobility, or cognizance. This information must be available for review at the facility.

To properly classify an ALF, two criteria must be considered. The classification will be determined by the Evacuation Capability of the residents and the level of care provided. The *Life Safety Code* used the term Personal Care to define the maximum level of care permitted in a Residential Board and Care Occupancy. Personal Care is defined as follows:

Personal Care. The care of residents who do not require chronic or convalescent medical or nursing care. Personal care involves responsibility for the safety of the resident while inside the building. Personal care might include daily awareness by the management of the resident's functioning and whereabouts, making and reminding a resident of appointments, the ability and readiness for intervention in the event of a resident experiencing a crisis, supervision in the areas of nutrition and medication, and actual provision of transient medical care.

The authority having jurisdiction will make a determination based on the Personal Care and Evacuation Capability of the residents when classifying the facility.

Page 1 of 3

□ **MAIN OFFICE**
□ **DISTRICT A**
246 South 14th Street
Lincoln, NE 69508-1804
(402) 471- 2027

□ **DISTRICT B**
438 West Market
Albion, NE 68620-1241
(402)-395-2164

□ **DISTRICT C**
200 South Silber
North Platte, NE 69101-3200
(308) 535-8181

□ **FLAMMABLE LIQUID
STORAGE TANK DIVISION**
246 South 14th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508-1804
(402) 471-9465

□ **TRAINING DIVISION**
2410 North Wheeler Avenue
Suite 112
Grand Island, NE 68801-2358
(308) 385-6892

Evacuation capability is based on the time it takes a resident to reach a point of safety. There are three levels of evacuation capability. They are:

- 1. Prompt (Less than three minutes to reach a point of safety)**
- 2. Slow (Three to 13 minutes)**
- 3. Impractical (More than 13 minutes)**

When any ALF is occupied by more than 16 residents and the facility is classified as Impractical and Evacuate the requirements of a Limited Care Facility shall be met.

Fire drills must be conducted to determine the evacuation capability of the residents. Fire drill details are listed below.

- 1. At least Six fire drills must be conducted annually (bimonthly).**
- 2. At least two of the drills must be held at night when residents are sleeping.**
- 3. The drills shall involve the actual evacuation of the residents and shall utilize all of the exits and means of escape. When possible, each drill should be use a different path of egress.**
- 4. The residents may be informed in advance of the drills.**
- 5. Actual exiting from windows is not required; opening the window and signaling for help is an acceptable alternative.**
- 6. Fire drills must be conducted as a Health Care Occupancy (12/year) for any facility that is classified as Impractical to Evacuate.**

The fire drills must terminate at a Point of Safety. A point of safety is defined as a Location that is:

- 1. Exterior to any away from the building for any building, or**

For a building that is fire sprinkler protected, or provides one hour fire rating for the structural members is:

- 2. Within an exit enclosure (Enclosed stair), or**
- 3. Within another portion of the building that is separated by a 20 minute rated smoke barrier.**

All fire drills must be documented for inspection by the authority having jurisdiction. When documenting fire drills, the following items must be included:

- 1. Time of drill.**
- 2. Simulated fire scenario. (Location, type of fire, smoke)**
- 3. Exits, means of escape and/or point of safety used.**
- 4. Names of staff and residents involved.**
- 5. Approximate time of each resident to reach the point of safety.**
- 6. Comments/observations/questions regarding the drill.**
- 7. Name of person conducting/in charge of drill.**

The facility shall also implement an emergency plan. The requirements of the emergency plan are listed below.

The administration of every residential board and care facility shall have, in effect and available to all supervisory personnel, written copies of a plan for protecting all persons in the event of fire. The plan shall include special staff response, including fire protection procedures needed to ensure the safety of any resident, and shall be amended or revised for use upon admission to the home of any resident with unusual needs. All employees shall be periodically instructed and kept informed with respect to their duties and responsibilities under the plan. Such instruction shall be reviewed by the staff at least every two months. A copy of the plan shall be readily available at all times within the facility.

The capabilities of ALF residents can vary widely. By compiling the information listed here, an accurate determination can be made to provide the highest level of safety for all occupants of an ALF, now and in the future.